Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRASIL 06205 251815Z

42
ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 PC-04 OMB-01 DRC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 /150 W
---------- 058706
P R 251608Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9798
INFO AMCONSUL RECIFE
ATKONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 9787
AMCNSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 6205

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV PINT BR
SUBJ: MDB CONVENTION

1. IN LIVELY AND SOMETIMES ACRIMONIOUS CONVENTION ON SEPTEMBER 21, MDB NOMINATED PRESIDENTIAL TICKET OF ULYSSES GUIMARAES (PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY) AND BARBOSA LIKKEYVBGUNHO (A WELL-KNOWN JOURNALIST). GUIMARAES' SPEECH WAS A HIGHLY LITERATE, SPARKLING STATEMENT OF MDB POSITIONS VERY MUCH IN CONTRAST TO ERNESTO GEISEL'S STRAIGHTFOREARD AND SOMEWHAT DULL EFFORT OF LAST WEEK. A PALL FELL OVER MDB WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT AFTER THE SPEECHES THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN TRANSMITTED BY TELEVISION DESPITE PRESENCE OF TELEVISION CAMERAS AND ASSURANCES OF THE GOVERNMENT THAT THE MDB WOULD RECEIVE THE SAME COVERAGE ACCORDED THE ARENA CONVENTION.

2. THE CONVENTION GOT OFF TO A ROARING START WHEN THE MDB "AUTENTICOS", LED BY DEPUTY FREITAS NOBRE, ATTEMPTED TO PUSH THROUGH A RESOLUTION CONDITIONING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES TO ACCESS TO THE MEDIA, PARTICULARLY TELEVISION. A COUNTERPROPOSAL
SPEARHEADED BY SENATOR NELSON CARNEIRO,
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PAGE 02 BRASIL 06205 251815Z

MDB SENATE LEADER, WAS PASSEW WHICH CALLED FOR A SEPARATE

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

CONVENTION TO DEAL WITH THE
ISSUE OF WITHDRAWING MDB
CANDIDACIES IF MEDIA ACCESS WAS NOT PROVIDED. AN OPEN
QUESTION REMAINS THAT BARBOSA LIMA SOBRINHO HAD WRITTEN
LETTER TO THE MDB PRESIDENT PRIOR TO THE CONVENTION IN-
DICATING THAT HE WOULD WITHDRAW HIS CANDIDACY IF MEDIA
COVERAGE WERE DISALLOWED.

3. THE TONE OF GUIMARAES' REMARKS CAN BEST BE ILLUSTRATED
BY ONE OF THE PASSAGES OF HIS SPEECH: "IT IS NOT A CANDIDATE
(GUIMARAES) WHO WILL TRAVEL THE COUNTRY. IT IS
AN ANTI-CANDIDATE TO DENOUNCE THE ANTI-ELECTION IMPOSED
BY THE ANTI-CONSTITUTION WHICH CONCEALS IA-5; SUB-
ORDINATES THE LEG-
ISLATURE AND THE JUDICIARY TO THE
EXECUTIVE; MAKES POSSIBLE PRISONERS UNPROTECTED BY
HABEAS CORPUS AND CONDEMNATIONS WITHOUT DEFENSE; PROFANES
THE INVIOLABILITY OF HOMES AND ENTERPRISES BY CLANDESTINE
EAVESDROPPING; MAKES INAUDIBLE DISCORDANT VOICES, AND
DEAFENS THE NATION BY THE CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS, RADIO,
TELEVISION, THE THEATER AND FILMS."

4. GUIMARAES CHARACTERIZED THE GOVERNMENT AS THEATER
OF THE ABCESS
BY BERTHOLD BRECHT: "..IF THE PEOPLE
LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD
DISSOLVE THE PEOPLE AND ELECT ANOTHER." HE HIT HARD AT
THE CONCEPT OF ECONOMIVFVEVELOPMENT WITHOUT ADEQUATE
PROVISION FOR EITHER SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OR POLITICAL
LIBERTIES. HE STATED, "LIBERTY WITHOUT ORDER AND SECURITY
IS CHAOS...ORDER AND SECURITY WITHOUT LIBERY IS THE
PERMISSIVENESS OF THE PENITENTIARY".

5. AS THE ESSENTIAL POINTS OF THE MDB CAMPAIGN, HE AD-
VOCATED:
A. "CRITICISM AND MONITORING OF THE GOVERNMENT AND
OF THE SYSTEM" CALLING FOR ELIMINATION OF IA-5 AND THE
REFORM OF THE CONSITIUTION.
B. PRESENTING THE PARTY PROGRAM OT THE PEOPLE WITH
A VIEW TO "FREE SUFFRAGE OF THE PEOPLE WITHOUT INTER-
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BRASIL 06205 251815Z

MEDIARIES".
C. THE ELECTION OF MDB SENATORS, FEDERAL AND STATE
DEPUTIES "IN ORDER TO CONQUER DEMOCRATIC NORMALITY" AND
TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT LEGISLATIVE STRENGTH TO PROPOSE
AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND TO ESTABLISH PARLIAMENT-
ARY INVESTIGATING COMMITTEES.

6. THE WITHDRAWAL OF TV COVERAGE AT THE LAST MINUTE

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

PLACES IN SERIOS DOUBT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MDB IN
THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. THE EMBASSY IS AWARE THAT
THE ARENA LEADERSHIP WAS MAKING A SERIOUS EFFORT TO
CONVINCE THE MDB TO SETTLE FOR TV COVERAGE OF THE
CONVENTION ONLY ON THE BASIS THAT THE ELECTORAL LAW PROVIDING
ELECTRONIC MEDIA COVERAGE FOR ALL PARTIES COULD BE INTER-
PRETED AS APPLYING ONLY TO DIRECT ELECTIONS. THE ARGUMENT
WAS USED THAT SINCE GEISEL WOULD NOT REALLY CAMPAIGN,
THIS WOULD GIVE THE MDB THE OPPORTUNITY TO DOMINATE ALL OTHER
MEDIA, THUS MAKING A CONFRONTATION OVER TELEVISION COVERAGER
UNNCECESSARY.

7. THERE ARE TWO VERSIONS AS TO WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED:
A. THE ESTADO DE SAO PAULO CARRIED A STORY THAT
DESPITE APPROVAL BY THE CHIEF OF THE CIVIL HOUSEHOLD,
LEITAO DE ABREU, THE DECISION TO PERMIT TELEVISION
COVERAGE WAS REVERSED BY "HIGHER AUTHORITY". WITHOUT
ANY CONCRETE PROOF AS YET, A NUMBER OF LOCAL OBSERVERS
BELIEVE THAT THE REFUSAL OF TELEVISION COVERAGE CAN BE
LAID AT THE DOOR OF GENERAL FONTOURA, CHIEF OF SNI.
B. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT TV GLOBO INDEPENDENTLY
DECIDED NOT TO CARRY THE COVERAGE, PRESUMABLY FEARING
EVENTQIL REPERCUSSIONS BECAUSE OF THE HARSHNESS OF THE MDB SPEECH.
THE DIARIOS ASSOCIADOS TV CHAIN THEN DECIDED TO FOLLOW
SUIT. THE COVERAGE WAS OFFERED VIDEO-TAPED TO OTHER
NETWORKS AND WAS REPORTEDLY CARRIED ONLY IN SANTA CATARINA,
PARAN AND BAHIA. EXCERPTS WERE CARRIED BY OTHER STATIONS.

8. THE EMBASSY IS IN THE PROCESS OF CHECKING ON THE ABOVE

DISCREPANCIES. IN VIEW OF THE POTENTIALLY SERIOUS EFFECT
ON THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, AND ON GEISEL'S OWN IMAGE,
WE WILL RESERVE COMMENT UNTIL THE FACTS BECOME A BIT CLEARER.
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